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L E T T E R

TO

THE AUTHOR OF AN ANONYMOUS TREATISE
ON INSPIRATION,

LATELY PRINTED AT YORK.

BY JOSEPH ENTWISLE.

“As deceivers and yet true.”

2 COR. vi. 8.

“By their fruits, ye shall know them.”

MATT. vii. 20.

“Is not this the Carpenter? And they were offended at him.”

MARK vi. 3.

York;

Printed by and for THOMAS WILSON and ROBERT SPENCE,
High-Ousegate, and sold by all the bookfellers,

Anno 1799.

L E T T E R

THE AUTHOR OF AN AND TWO

ON INSTRUCTION

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BY J. L. L. L.

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by their being, yet not known
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INTRODUCTION.

THE following pages would not have appeared before the Public in answer to an Anonymous Publication, had not the writer considered that silence in the Friends of Methodism might be construed into a tacit acknowledgment of the truth and justice of the charges brought against them. They, indeed, who know the Methodist Preachers, are in no danger of being misled. But many who are not acquainted with them, who never heard any of those Preachers, who are held out to the World as Fanatics, Enthusiasts, &c. are very liable to imposition.—If the reputation and popularity of the Fanatics (so called) were the only things concerned, a reply, might be dispensed with; but a regard to truth, religion, and the grand doctrines of the Reformation, or rather, the doctrines of Jesus Christ, forbids a bare silent disapprobation.

All that is desired of the Public, is a calm, dispassionate, impartial examination of what is offered.

offered. Do not condemn men unheard. Do not pin your faith on any man's sleeve. Do justice to yourselves *as men*, by forming a judgment of your own, AFTER, not BEFORE you have considered the merits of the cause. "TRUTH IS MIGHTY AND WILL PREVAIL."

The candid Reader must not expect any show of learning: No pretence is made to it. Plain language is used, on a plain subject, in which plain people, as well as others, are interested.—Whatever reception the following remarks may meet with, the writer will have the satisfaction of having intended well; and will not cease to pray that the "Catholic (Universal) Church may be so guided and governed by the good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians, may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life;" and that "peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established amongst us to all generations."

A LETTER, &c.

REV. SIR,

IT is the advice of an *inspired Writer* to "*Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.*" And, blessed be God, in this favoured country, under the protection of wholesome laws, we have full liberty so to do. If any thing deserves our attention and most strict investigation, it is the important subject of your Treatise. Charity, which "*hopeth all things,*" gives you credit for the purity of your intentions; your respectable situation in society, as a Clergyman, demands respect, and it would be wrong to controvert your opinions, merely for the sake of controversy. But the Apostolic advice, just mentioned, authorizes an examination of your sentiments, and the arguments by which they are supported; and as you do not pretend to *extraordinary inspiration* or *infallibility*, you cannot reasonably object to it. Your Pamphlet is, indeed, an appeal to the public, who are supposed to be capable of thinking for themselves. It is hoped, therefore, you will not be offended, that an obscure person takes the liberty to address you from the press; especially as he intends to treat you in a manner suitable to your character.

You entitle your Publication a "**TREATISE ON INSPIRATION, in which THE PRETENCE TO EXTRAORDINARY INSPIRATION is considered AND CLEARLY REFUTED.**" And it seems to be levelled chiefly at the Methodist Preachers, to whom you at-

tach the epithets, "Fanatics, and Enthusiasts." Your readers, in general, it is probable, have no determinate ideas affixed to these terms; only they understand that they mean something very ridiculous *. But before any man makes those who are accounted *Fanatics*, &c. objects of laughter, he should be certain that they deserve such treatment; lest he be found to "*sit in the seat of the scornful.*"

I shall now proceed, in the fear of God, to examine and make some remarks on your *Treatise*. And let me beg, Sir, that you will give the following pages an attentive and candid perusal.

In the first place it may be observed, that you set out on wrong ground; representing the Methodist Preachers as *pretending to extraordinary inspiration*, like that with which the Apostles were favoured. See page 1. "In these days of Fanaticism, it highly imports the members of the Established Church of this Kingdom to have right notions respecting inspiration; because the better they are grounded in the truth concerning it, the better they will be secured against the seduction of those fanatical Preachers, who want to persuade the world, and who too often succeed in persuading weak minds, that they are more inspired than the Ministers of the National Church; as if God, with whom is no respect of persons, respected and favoured them more than others."

Page 11, You say, "Vain indeed, ridiculously vain! is the pretence to inspiration, as set up by modern enthusiasts. For as they are not endued with

* It is very common when any thing is said about the influences of the Holy Spirit, for some persons to exclaim, "Enthusiasm! Enthusiasm!" And this is to stand in the place of reason and argument.

with power to work a miracle of any kind whatever; so neither do they possess either the gift of tongues, or any one of those supernatural gifts, by which the Apostles were enabled to prove their divine mission and inspiration." Having observed, page 14, that "*Methodist Preachers are in general very illiterate;*" You go on, page 15, "Strange indeed it is, that men so deficient in point of evangelical knowledge, as many of those Preachers are, should ever take it into their heads to fancy that they are *inspired as the Apostles were.*"

These quotations, taken verbatim, from the pages referred to, very much misrepresent the principles and conduct of the Methodist Preachers. Permit me, therefore, to set this subject in a just point of view; that you, Sir, and the *World* may judge how far you have exercised Christian candour towards them.

The venerable Mr. Wesley, in a Sermon he preached at St. Mary's Oxford, before the University, in the year 1744, expresses himself so well on this point, that I shall transcribe part of what he says, which may be considered as the general sentiment of the Methodists. Speaking of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, he says, "Whether these gifts of the Holy Ghost were designed to remain in the Church throughout all ages; and whether or no they will be restored at the nearer approach of the *restitution of all things*, are questions which it is not needful to decide. But it is necessary to observe this, that even in the infancy of the Church, God divided them with a sparing hand. *Were all even then Prophets? Were all workers of miracles? Had all the gifts of healing? Did all speak with tongues?* No, in nowise. Perhaps not one in a thousand. Probably none but the teachers in the Church, and only some of them. It was, therefore, for a more excellent purpose than this that they were all filled

with the Holy Ghost. It was to give them (what none can deny to be essential to all Christians in every age) *the mind which was in Christ*, those holy *fruits of the Spirit*, which whosoever hath not, is none of his; to fill them with *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness*; to endue them with *faith*, (perhaps it might be rendered fidelity,) with *meekness and temperance*; (Gal. v. 22, 23, 24;) to enable them to *crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts*, its passions and desires; and, in consequence of that inward change, to fulfil all outward righteousness, to walk as Christ also walked, *in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love.*"

It appears from the Book of Common Prayer, that the opinion of the Methodists respecting inspiration is agreeable to that of the Reformers, and the Compilers of the Liturgy. "Send thy Holy Ghost and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of Charity, the very bond of peace, and all virtues." Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday—"O Lord, from whom all good things do come; Grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same, thro' Jesus Christ, Amen." 5th Sun. after Easter.—"We beseech thee leave us not comfortless; but send us thy Holy Ghost to comfort us," &c. Sun. after Ascension.—"Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things; graft in our hearts the love of thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy, keep us in the same," &c. Barnabas Day. And once more, "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name," &c. Com. Service.

It is true, many of the Methodist preachers profess to be inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the

the Gospel; which is also the case with every Clergyman, when he enters into Holy Orders. But none of the Methodist Preachers with whom I am acquainted, speak on this subject as you represent them; they do not say, they have an *extraordinary inspiration like that of the Apostles*. No, they speak the words of truth and soberness. They say that they were once enemies to God by wicked works, but are now reconciled unto him through the death of his Son, *Rom. v. 10*. That having themselves *tasted that* the Lord is gracious, and obtained that peace which passeth understanding, they feel an ardent desire that others may partake of the same grace, and enjoy the same comfort. They see multitudes, for whom Christ died, serving divers lusts and pleasures; following *the devices and desires of their own hearts*; living in the practice of drunkenness, prophane swearing, breaking the Sabbath, &c.; in short, dishonouring God, injuring men, and seeking death in the error of their life. They look on these with pity, they pray for them, they exhort them to flee from the wrath to come, point them to the *Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*, and show them the way of salvation, by grace through faith. They attribute all this to the Holy Spirit; because they know that "*all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed*" from above, from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning*.

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* It must be allowed that the Methodist Preachers pray for peculiar assistance in their sacred employment, and are frequently indulged with it. They are enabled "*to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest*" the Holy Scriptures. Their understandings are opened; their views of divine things are extended; and their hearts are inflamed with love to the souls of men, and
ardent

When I first looked over your Treatise, I was at a loss to account for the gross misrepresentations it contains. Charity forbade the supposition that you had designedly and deliberately propagated falsehood. Indeed had you known it to be such, a regard for your own reputation would have restrained you from publishing *that* to the world, which *thousands*, even in this county, could refute. Will you bear with me, Sir, if I say, that a desire to put the best construction on your motives and designs, has led me to this conclusion, that your mind was not in a proper state to form a just opinion on the subject. Do not misunderstand me, Sir; I do not mean to say, that you are wanting, either in natural or acquired abilities, to judge with precision; (*it requires no great talents to judge of matters of fact.*) But, first, You do not appear to have had a sufficient knowledge of the Methodist Preachers, to have been capable of judging aright. Probably your situation in life is such, that you never had an opportunity of fully informing yourself. And how can a man, how-

ardent desire for their salvation. In delivering truths of infinite and eternal importance, their own minds are deeply affected; and the awful subjects, of which they speak, appear to them to be interesting in the highest degree to themselves and to their hearers. Under the influence of these *views* and *feelings*, they are often constrained to speak with great fervour, and at such seasons, are willing to impart, *not the Gospel of God only, but also their own souls.* Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should *thus* assist his servants? Is not this what we pray for in the Collect, with which this Letter is concluded? The effects are pleasing. Sinners, asleep in their sins, awake to righteousness; (1 Cor. xv. 34.) penitents, oppressed with conscious guilt, are filled with comfort; and sincere believers are edified, built up in holiness. Is it contrary to humility to say, on such occasions, "*Not I, but the grace of God that is in me?*" And when the Lord "*pours upon the*" Preacher "*and congregation the healthful Spirit of his grace,*" should we exclaim, Enthusiasm! Fanaticism! or gratefully acknowledge his unmerited kindness and condescension?

however sensible and learned, judge in a case of which he has only an imperfect knowledge? Secondly, You do not appear to have had an unbiassed, unprejudiced mind: Quite the reverse! From some cause, your mind has been full of such prepossessions as would not admit of a sober, impartial examination of the sentiments and conduct of the men whom you have condemned.

Let me entreat you, Sir, to re-examine your *Treatise*; and thro' the whole of it, to keep in mind that divine rule of our blessed Lord, "*Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, so do ye unto them.*"

I cannot omit a remark on what you say, page 15, on the late Rev. Mr. Wesley. You observe, "The late Mr. Wesley, that zealous propagator of Methodism, sometimes expressed himself concerning extraordinary divine assistance, in such a manner as seemed to indicate that he renounced all claim to it." You quote a passage from him, in which he says, "I claim no other direction of God's but what is common to all believers: I am no otherwise inspired than you are, if you love God." You add, "But this noted Methodist Preacher, oft inconsistent, and at variance with himself, no doubt, frequently held a very different language; a language incompatible with this plain and most certain truth; and many, if not most, of his followers hold the same." This wants proof. And it is somewhat singular, Sir, that you should bring the charge of inconsistency, and indeed *falsehood*, against one of acknowledged learning and integrity; (now incapable of answering you,) *without* proof. What! could you not find in all his numerous writings any expression that would have substantiated your charge, or, at least, have given some shadow of credibility to your assertion? Or did you imagine that your ipse dixit would pass for argument, and save you the trouble

in availing as serious Mr. Wesley, who writes as follows in

of searching for and producing it? *Does this appear learned or candid?*

It has before been proved that you falsely charge the Methodist Preachers with pretending to be inspired as the Apostles were. Page 4, "The Apostles, you say, were without doubt, guided infallibly, so as to be secured from the very possibility of mistake." In the same page you observe, "Should any pretender to inspiration have the audacity and presumption to set up for an *infallible guide*, we may and must consider him as either a *deceived Fanatic*, or an *impious Imposter*. Do I misunderstand you, Sir? It appears to me that you mean to fix the stigma of *pretended infallibility* on the Methodist Preachers, whom with much *Christian moderation*, you denominate *Fanatics*. This is a serious charge; and if it can be proved, the Methodist Preachers ought to be regarded as *deluded men* or *imposters*; and too much cannot be said to guard the people against them. But it is amazing that a Clergyman in *Yorkshire*, where there are so many thousands of Methodists, should insinuate any thing of the kind. Whole congregations may rise up and prove it to be a palpable misrepresentation. They can say to you, "Our Preachers are so far from setting up as *infallible guides*, that they exhort us to prove and examine what they teach. They tell us *they* have understandings, and *we* have understandings—*they* have the Bible, and *we* have the Bible. That we are capable of judging for ourselves, and, that in matters of eternal importance, we *ought* to judge for ourselves; it would be dangerous, if not wicked, to neglect it. Nay, they exhort us to imitate the *noble Bereans*, who searched the scriptures daily to see whether those things they heard were true:" Every man, according to his ability and opportunities, should imitate that great and good man, the late Rev. Mr. Wesley, who writes as follows in
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the Preface to his Sermons. "To candid, reasonable men, I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart. I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing thro' life as an arrow thro' the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God: just hovering over the great gulph; till a few moments hence, I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing, the way to heaven: how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a Book. O give me that Book! At any price give me the Book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *Homo* unius libri*. Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone: only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his Book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does any thing appear dark and intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights. Lord is it not thy word, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God? Thou givest liberally and upbraidest not.* Thou hast said, *If any be willing to do thy will, he shall know.* I am willing to do. Let me know thy will. I then search after and consider parallel passages of scripture, *comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* I meditate thereon, with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God; and then the writings, whereby being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach." *Does this favour of pretended infallibility?*

Again. Having held out the Methodist Preachers as a set of ignorant men, especially the "common
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* A man of one Book.

cast,” you proceed page 16, “ Mark now the singular modesty of these illiterate men! They scruple not to set themselves above *the best instructed, the very ablest* of those Ministers,” (i. e. of the established Church,) and to obtrude themselves upon the World as the only fit persons to preach the Gospel, and who alone teach the truth as it is in Jesus.”

Here again, Sir, they must appeal to their numerous hearers. They highly esteem *the best instructed, the very ablest of those Ministers*—They are happy to hear them preach, and wish them prosperity. They rejoice that many in the Churches preach the truth as it is in Jesus; and, also, that their number is increasing.

The best way for you, Sir, or any other dissatisfied or prejudiced persons, to judge whether the Methodist Preachers pretend to *infallibility, or set themselves up above the best instructed* of the Clergy, would be to attend their preaching for a few weeks. Whoever is above this, ought to suspend his judgment: for he certainly is not a proper person to sit as Judge in this case.

You will bear with me, Sir, if I take notice of another misrepresentation. Page 15, “ These men affect a great regard for the doctrines of the Established Church.” They do not AFFECT it: They are sincere in professing a strong attachment to the leading Doctrines of the Church, and very frequently appeal to the Liturgy, Articles and Homilies of the Church of England, as well as the Holy Scriptures, to prove their doctrines. Let me take the liberty briefly to state the Doctrines they usually deliver, as they are expressed in the Homilies &c.—And this is the more necessary, because a great majority of the Members of the Church are unacquainted with those precious Repositories of the Protestant and Scriptural doctrine of Salvation by grace, through faith—the Homilies.—If the

Author

Author of a "Treatise on Inspiration," &c. will take the trouble to go through a Parish in Town or Country, and ask every individual what he thinks of the Homilies; he will find, it is to be feared, that not one in twenty knows what they are. The *Fanatics*, as you call them, find that, when they *first visit* a village, and prove what they advance from Scripture, and then from their own Prayer-Book, and lastly from the Homilies, the countenances of the people are expressive of surprise and astonishment. The Book of Common Prayer never before appeared to them so full of wholesome doctrine; and as for the Homilies, the greater part of the congregation never heard of them before. This is fact. "But to return from this digression."

The principal subject of Methodist Sermons are as follows—First. They constantly affirm, that man is in a sinful, lost, ruined, and helpless state, and that his Salvation flows from the mere mercy of God, thro' Christ Jesus. This is taught in the Homily on the Misery of Man. Part II. "Of ourselves, and by ourselves, we have no goodness, help, or Salvation, but contrariwise damnation, and death everlasting; which if we deeply weigh and consider, we shall the better understand the great mercy of God, and how our Salvation cometh only by Christ. For in ourselves, as of ourselves, we find nothing whereby we may be delivered from this miserable captivity, into the which we are cast thro' the envy of the Devil, by breaking of God's commandment in our first Parent Adam. We are all become unclean; but we are not able to cleanse ourselves, nor to make one another of us clean. We are by nature the children of God's wrath; but we are not able to make ourselves the children and inheritors of God's glory. We are sheep run astray; but we cannot of our own power come again to the Sheepfold, so great is our weakness. God of his

own mercy saveth us, and setteth out his exceeding love towards us, in that, of his own voluntary goodness, when we were perished, he saved us, and provided an everlasting kingdom for us. And all these heavenly treasures are given us, not for our own deserts, merits, or good deeds, (which of ourselves we have done,) but for his own mere mercy freely."—See the whole Homily.

REPENTANCE TOWARDS GOD is frequently, almost constantly, introduced into the discourses of the Methodist Preachers. This, according to the Homily on Repentance, implies, (1.) "Contrition of the heart: For we must be earnestly sorry for our sins, and unfeignedly lament and bewail that we have by them so grievously offended our most bounteous and merciful God, who so tenderly loved us, that he gave his only begotten Son to die a most bitter death, and to shed his blood for our redemption and deliverance." Under this head they often quote those excellent words in the Communion Service, so expressive of the feelings of a true penitent, "the remembrance of our sin is grievous, the burden intolerable." (2.) "An *unfeigned* confession and acknowledgment of our sins unto God, that if he should deal with us according to his justice, we do deserve a thousand hells, if there were so many." Homily on Repentance. This is enforced upon their hearers, as absolutely necessary to salvation; and the general confession in the daily service is produced, very frequently, as suitable on this occasion. "Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep," &c. Another thing included in repentance, is "amendment, or new life, in bringing forth fruits worthy of repentance." Hom. on Rep. This repentance, they teach, is the gift of God, though the act of the sinner. Hence they can, with sincerity, say, "Let us beseech God to grant us true repentance and his

his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy."

Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is likewise insisted upon as necessary to salvation. By Faith they mean, not only a belief of the History and Doctrines of Jesus Christ; but, also, a view of the suitableness of Jesus as a Saviour,—a cordial, embracing of him,—and dependence on him for salvation. By this faith we obtain the forgiveness of sins, and are justified in the sight of God. This faith produces love to God and man, and universal obedience to the precepts of the Gospel. The Homily on salvation, Part III. expresses the same thing in the following manner: "For the right and true Christian faith, is not only to believe that Holy Scripture and all the articles of our faith, are true; but also to have a *sure trust* and confidence in God's merciful promises to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ; whereof do follow a loving heart to obey his commandments. And this true Christian faith, neither any devil hath, nor yet any man, who in the outward profession of his mouth, and in his outward receiving of the sacraments, in coming to the church, and in all other outward appearances, seemeth to be a Christian man, and yet in his living and deeds sheweth the contrary: For how can a man have this true faith, this *sure trust and confidence* in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins be forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God, and to be partaker of the kingdom of heaven by Christ, when he liveth ungodly, and denieth Christ in his deeds? Surely no such ungodly man can have this faith and trust in God." Do, men who *professedly dwell* on the above topics, only **AFFECT** to have a great regard for the doctrines of the Established Church? If any doubt the truth of these assertions, I would only say, *hear for yourselves, and THEN* JUDGE.

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The next thing I take notice of, is what you say, page 13, on the necessary qualifications for a right understanding of the New Testament. "First, a competent knowledge of that language in which the Apostles left those Scriptures written; because the English translation of them being in many places incorrect and faulty, he who does not understand the original, cannot possibly rectify the false reading, but must always take the text, when *wrong*, as well as when right, in *the sense in which it is given**." It must be allowed that the knowledge of languages is an embellishment, and a critical knowledge of Greek an advantage to a Preacher. He may perceive many beauties in the sacred text, of which the readers of a translation are insensible. But it would be difficult to prove the knowledge of Greek to be *necessary* in order to explain and enforce the doctrines before mentioned, viz. The depravity of human nature, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, producing holiness of heart and life; subjects these of the greatest importance, as they are connected with the vitals of Christianity. See Acts xx. 20. "*I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

The English, I believe, is allowed by *competent judges*, to be a good translation; perhaps it is better than any other translation extant. The errors with which

* All is not gold that glitters, nor is every man learned who pretends to be so. To show your erudition, you insert a few Greek characters in the title page, taken from Rev. ii. 2. In that quotation there are, however, two mistakes, which any boy, who has learned the Rudiments of Greek, could correct. By putting εἰς for εἰς, and εἰς for εἰς, you have made it nonsense. If it be said the errors are typographical; why were they not corrected in the errata?—Mat. vii. 3, 4, is well worth your attention.

which it is charged, do not affect the essential doctrines of the Gospel; but mostly relate to curious, disputable points, of which a man may be ignorant without injury. And, perhaps, if the translators were alive to explain their *own* terms, all the errors would be corrected. Do not you observe, Sir, that while you are striking at *illiterate* Methodist Preachers, you wound the reputation of those learned men who were employed in translating our Bible? You, in effect, charge them with *ignorance*! or *something worse*; and encourage the vulgar to exclaim, "*Who shall decide if Doctors disagree!*" This, I fear, will not serve the cause of Christianity!!!

"Another requisite" you observe, page 13, "for rightly understanding the sacred volume, is a perfect acquaintance with those Jewish (not to mention Pagan) rites and ceremonies, those religious observances, customs and usages, to which our Saviour and his Apostles in almost every page of it allude; without a proper knowledge of which, their meaning very often cannot be fully and truly, if at all, apprehended." There is much propriety in this remark, and it is hoped every Methodist Preacher will endeavour to gain the necessary information. Will you permit me to add, that if you had duly attended to this, it is probable you would have given a different turn to John xx. 22, introduced by you p. 2. Your criticism is very curious. "Let us now attend to the strict meaning of the word *Inspiration*. This term is derived from the Latin word *inspiro*; which signifies to breathe in or upon: so that the Apostles were inspired in the strictest sense of the term, which *no one else ever was, our Lord not having vouchsafed to breathe on any but them.*" Poor Paul! thou wert not there! Well mightest thou say, *I was born out of due time!* To be serious. Do you mean to say that the breath from the body of Jesus entered into every one present, and that *that* breath was the Holy Ghost?

May

May we not rather consider him as adopting the manner of the Eastern Doctors and Prophets, who, in teaching, frequently impressed the minds of their disciples by symbolical actions? In this view of the passage, Jesus, by breathing on his disciples, signified, that by the invisible energy of his power he would confer upon them the gifts of the Spirit.

What you advance, page 3, on the subject of inspiration, or divine aid, deserves consideration. Speaking of divine aid, &c. you assert, "That it is not done in a *perceptible* manner, we all know; and therefore it *incontestibly* follows, that the Divine Spirit, when present with us, is *imperceptibly so*. It seems necessary to be observed here, that the influence of the Spirit, which we very properly term Grace, is not perpetually, or uninterruptedly continued: For as it is not given when not wanted, so it is *vouchsafed to those only who deserve it*; and when by their vicious conduct, men render themselves unworthy of the favour, it is then withdrawn and withheld from them. But when so withheld it is not, however, irrecoverably lost; for by proper application it may be regained. To which I shall only add, that as they who are favoured with this divine communication *perceive not* when it is made them, so they are *not sensible* when it is interrupted or suspended." Let us examine this. "That it is not done in a *perceptible* manner we all know; (*what all?*) and therefore it *incontestibly* follows, that the Divine Spirit, when present with us, is *imperceptibly so*."

It is observed by the Author you have quoted in the *Introduction*, page 5, "We know no more of the workings of the Spirit than we know of the wind." (Alluding to John iii. 8. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.")

Spirit.") Granted. But is the wind *imperceptible*? 'Tis true, we cannot see it, but we can *feel it*, we can see its *effects*. Try to convince a man who is almost stiffened by a piercing north wind in January, that the influence of the wind is *imperceptible*.—Tell him you can *incontestibly* prove it,—philosophize upon it,—criticise on the Latin word for wind, and show your great erudition. The man would tell you, Fact is fact: I painfully feel it. So a man whom the Spirit is convincing of sin, because of unbelief, (John xvi. 9.) painfully feels his influence. See Homily on Fasting. Part I. When men *feel* in themselves the heavy burden of sin, see damnation to be the reward of it, behold with the eye of their mind the horror of hell, they tremble, they quake, and are inwardly touched with sorrowfulness of heart, and cannot but accuse themselves, and open their grief unto Almighty God, and call upon him for mercy."

Do we not perceive it when after a long and hard frost the South wind melts the ice and snow, and softens the ground; and is not the sensation agreeable? So when the Holy Spirit sheds abroad his love in the heart of the penitent sinner, (Rom. v. 5.) and fills him with divine consolation; (1 Peter i. 8.) he is agreeably sensible of the Spirit's influence. "Godly men *feel inwardly* God's Holy Spirit inflaming their hearts;" Homily on certain portions of Scripture. Part I. "God give us grace to know these things, and *feel* them in our hearts. This knowledge and feeling is not of ourselves. Let us then meekly call upon the bountiful Spirit, the Holy Ghost to inspire us with his presence," &c. Homily for Rogation Week. Part III.

Is it rational to suppose that the following excellent prayer can be answered, and a man *be insensible of it*? "O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee, such good things as pass man's un-

derstanding. *Pour into our hearts such love towards thee, that we loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire,"* &c. Coll. 6th Sunday after Trinity.

Every time the Reverend Author of a "*Treatise on Inspiration,*" &c. reads the Communion Service, he prays, "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name."——Do you think, Sir, the answer of this prayer can be received, and the heart, naturally deceitful *above all things and desperately wicked*, (Jer. xvii. 9.) be *made clean within us*, and we be *insensible* of the operation?

If we can neither *perceive* when we are assisted, nor be "*sensible*" when that assistance is "*suspended*," what an uncomfortable, distressing state of doubt and uncertainty must a man be in who feels the force of the following passage, *Rom. viii. 9. 14. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God DWELL IN YOU.* Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

* I will dismiss this point by desiring you, Sir, to read and consider, 1 Cor. 2. 14. "*The natural man*

* *Said or Sung at the Ordination of Priests.*

Come Holy Ghost, our Souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire;
Thou the anointing spirit art,
Who dost thy sev'nfold gifts impart.
Thy blessed unction from above,
Is *comfort, life, and fire of love.*
Enable with perpetual light,
The dulness of our blinded sight;
Anoint and cheer our soiled face,
With the abundance of thy grace.

Is all this imperceptible?

man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Every thinking person who knows himself will agree with you page 3, that "*the influence of the Spirit is not given but when wanted.*" But he must observe, at the same time, IT IS ALWAYS WANTED. For he remembers the words of his Lord. "*Without me ye can do nothing.*" John xv. 5. Nor does he scruple to use St. Paul's words, Rom. viii. 26. "Likewise the spirit also helpeth our infirmities: For we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered."

Further you affirm, in the same page, "IT IS VOUCHSAFED TO THOSE ONLY WHO DESERVE IT."—Alas! who can say, I deserve it? This strikes at the very root of the doctrines of the established Church. See Article XIII. "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, for as much as they spring not of faith in Jesus, neither do *they make men meet to receive grace*, or (as the School Authors say) DESERVE grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of Sin."—The "*best instructed*" of the Clergy must have painful feelings while they see the Doctrines of the Church so undermined by one of her Sons; and A CLERGYMAN TOO!!!

To conclude. When we consider the state of Religion in this Country—The great ignorance of thousands in divine things—their total want of religious concern; the prevalence of sin and profaneness, and above all, the rapid increase of infidelity; every man who sincerely attempts to promote the knowledge and practice of Christianity, deserves praise, rather than blame,—Happy would

it be, if "all who profess and call themselves Christians" were such in reality: possessed of the mind of Christ, guided by his word, led by his spirit, and actuated by a pure desire to glorify him; transcribing in their tempers, words, and actions, the precepts, and adorning the doctrines of the Gospel of God our Saviour in all things.—Then would bold blasphemers be silenced, infidels, if not convinced, would be confounded; and God be glorified by us, and *be the glory in the midst of us, and a wall of fire around us.* May the God of all grace, thus give us his blessing! That this may be the case, let us all unite to pray, "Almighty and everlasting God, who alone workest great marvels; Send down upon all Bishops and Curates, and ALL CONGREGATIONS COMMITTED TO THEIR CHARGE, the healthful Spirit of thy grace; and that they may truly please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing: Grant this, O Lord, for the honour of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen."

I am, Rev. Sir, Yours, &c.
J. E.
YORK,
Dec. 16, 1799.

THE END.

To conclude. When we consider the state of Religion in this Country—The great ignorance of thousands in divine things—their total want of religious concern; the prevalence of sin and immorality; and above all, the total want of piety; every man who is a Christian, and who is a Christian, must be grieved and distressed. The knowledge and practice of Christianity, more the knowledge and practice of Christianity, deserves praise, rather than blame. Happy would it

